

Fire Information – Elbow Pass Complex

September 1, 2012 10:00 AM

Incident Team: Type 3 IMT Bill King, Brett Witte (T)

Cause: Lightning

Acres: 20,414 acres

Resources: 1 helicopter

Containment 0%

Total Personnel: 25

Contact: Glenda Scott 562-3791

The Elbow Pass Complex is comprised of five different lightning ignitions from July 12 through July 31. These four fires have merged into one fire, the Elbow Pass Complex: Triple Divide Fire, Rapid Creek Fire, Elbow Pass Fire, and Bar Creek Fire. The fires are generally located 25 miles west southwest of Augusta, Montana. The Falls Point fire is south of the Complex. All are located in inaccessible terrain in heavy fuels. The fires are in the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas and are on three national forests.

The Elbow Pass Complex acreage remains at 20,414 acres; 16,117 acres on the Lewis & Clark National Forest, 3,585 acres on the Flathead National Forest, and 712 acres on the Lolo National Forest. Additionally, fire managers are managing the Falls Point fire on the Lolo National forest, currently 266 acres.

RED FLAG WARNINGS are predicted for Saturday and Sunday this weekend. All forest users are reminded to be especially careful during activities that could cause sparks. This includes but is not limited to, being careful with campfire, carefully monitoring all cooking activities, not tossing cigarettes on the ground and making sure vehicles and trailers are not dragging anything that could create sparks.

Yesterday's Activities: The fire continues to creep and smolder with individual tree and group torching along the south and west perimeter in unburned timber. Minimal perimeter growth was seen. Helicopter water drops were provided in the South Fork Sun River to cool a couple smokes on the northwest side of the drainage. Firefighters collected fuel samples to update fire spread modeling with the curing of the vegetation. Structure protection remains in place for Danaher and Basin Cabins. The Falls Point fire showed more fire activity than had been present during the past few days; individual and group tree torching was seen on the southeast perimeter.

Todays Update: RED FLAG WARNINGS are in effect today through Sunday evening. A cold front with high winds from the west are predicted. The winds, combined with low relative humidity, combine to create critical fire weather. We expect fire activity to continue where there is heat along the southern and western portions of the fire. Short uphill runs and single tree and group torching are expected. Fire managers plan to fly the fire to monitor fire movement and activity and map fire spread; although winds may delay the flight. Water drops will be used to cool hot spots if needed. Firefighter and public safety during all operations is our number one priority. Fire managers are prepared to assist with initial attack.

Recreation Opportunities: While the Benchmark Road is open, the area is closed beginning a half mile west of the road. Numerous trails remain closed. Please check with local offices for specific recreation information. Please note that vehicles parked at the trailhead could be at fire risk due to possible future fire activity. The Benchmark Air Strip is closed, the Augusta air strip is open.

For more information on these or other wildland fires, and related information visit:

www.inciweb.org or call:

Augusta Information Station 406-562-3247

Seeley Lake Ranger District 406-677-2233

Choteau District Office

Spotted Bear Ranger District

406-466-5341

406-758-5376